

## Support for Study Policy and Procedure

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## Support for Study Policy and Procedure

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## Support for Study Policy and Procedure

### 1. Introduction

The Support for Study policy and process aims to create a robust supportive framework around a student who may be facing challenges engaging with their studies or university life due to health-related issues. It encompasses not only academic support but also wellbeing, independent living, personal and community safety, and appropriate interactions with staff, students, and visitors at the University. The University is committed to supporting student wellbeing, recognising that a positive approach to physical and mental health is crucial for student learning and academic achievement.

#### A. Scope

This Policy concerns all students on University of Hull UG, PGT and PGR Registered Programmes including Hull Online and Apprenticeship Programmes.

If there are Fitness to Practise considerations for University of Hull students on professionally governed courses this policy may be superseded or used in conjunction with the Fitness to Practise Policy.

This policy applies to HYMS students where the HYMS Fitness to Practise or HYMS Fitness to Study is not applicable.

### 2. When to use this policy

Where a student has a physical or mental health need that is impacting on their ability to engage in any aspect of their student experience including learning, living and participation in the wider community.

Where a student's case may be addressed by more than one process consideration should be given to invoking the process which best addresses the greatest need or risk.

The steps in this policy aim to address the support a student may need to enable them to continue to study, it should not be used to address poor academic progress as a primary concern, nor should it continue to be used where poor academic progress remains the only concern. To ensure parity across the student body issues of poor academic progress should be addressed by other means.

### 3. Informal Support and Action Planning

Personal Supervisors, academic staff, and academic services staff should engage in informal support and action planning with students during their regular interactions. Support and action planning should be utilised in cases where the level of risk due to the student's health and wellbeing is low, their academic position is vulnerable but recoverable, and the impact of their behaviour on others is limited.

This should include consideration of the following

- Involving the Personal Tutor or Programme Lead for academic support
- Involving appropriate staff from Academic Services
- Referring the student to specialist support internally and externally

- Setting agreed-upon actions for the student, such as improving attendance or engagement (see Appendix 1 for template)
- Scheduling a follow-up date to review progress

#### **4. Stage 1: Support for Study**

If informal support and action planning have not yielded successful outcomes or the risks are too high to be managed informally, Support for Study can be considered. The appropriateness of invoking the process will be determined by academic services teams following consultation with relevant staff. Once this decision is made the student will be informed.

Before arranging the case meeting, it may be necessary to gather medical evidence or seek advice from internal or external professional services and other colleagues. The responsibility for gathering evidence sits with the relevant academic services teams.

Each student under support for study will have a case holder who will be responsible for supporting the student throughout the process, including initial communication, sharing action plans and any formal letters, monitoring progress against actions and initiating meetings and reviews. Administrative support will be provided through the Academic Services Centre team.

##### **4.1 Support for Study Case Meeting procedure**

- The responsibility for coordinating this meeting sits with the case holder
- The meeting should occur as soon as possible, no later than 10 working days of the issue or concern being raised or identified.
- The coordinator will request administrative support from the Academic Services Centre team
- The meeting should include the following staff:
  - Head, Mental Health Support or a nominated deputy as the chair
  - An academic member of staff (e.g., program lead or personal supervisor)
  - A member of a relevant academic services team this should be someone other than the person who has been case holding the student
  - Optional participants based on the case (e.g., campus accommodation team, external professionals, library staff, security staff, HUSU advice centre staff)
- If a member of Academic Services has been supporting the student, they may attend the meeting to provide information and support to the student, but will not participate in the decision-making process.
- Whenever possible, the student should be invited and offered the opportunity to be accompanied by a supporter e.g friend or parent. If the student is unable or unwilling to attend, they may send a written statement, but the meeting can proceed without them.
- The meeting should include the opportunity for collaborative decision making with the student, but may also include discussion without the student and supporters present to decision make and agree action plans.
- The meeting should be positive, supportive, and timely, focusing on current issues and future steps. Risk assessment should consider the student, their studies, and the wider community and outcomes should aim to empower the student to take responsibility for change.

- The Panel should agree on suggested outcomes and the case holder should work with the student to develop an action plan that meets these outcomes. It is the responsibility of the chair to share outcomes with the student and the case holder.
- Examples of outcomes may include referral to appropriate internal and external agencies, involving the student's emergency contact, recommending specific academic arrangements (e.g., extenuating circumstances or study suspension), setting timelines for actions and improvements, and establishing a framework to monitor progress.
- The chair will also consider sharing relevant outcomes and information with relevant stakeholders should also be shared with concerned parties, such as security, library, or accommodation staff.

#### 4.2 Review and termination of the Support for Study Stage 1 Process

As part of the outcomes a review date will be agreed, the caseholder will update the Head, Mental Health as to progress against the agreed outcomes, and will agree one of the following options:

- Is making good progress but has not met all outcomes, agree a new review date and the case holder will inform and continue to work with the student.
- Has met all outcomes and the concerns have been appropriately addressed, agree to end the process and the Head, Mental Health Support will send a formal letter to notify the student.
- Has made no progress or inadequate progress, reconvene a review meeting.
- Risk has increased, consider escalation to stage 2 or emergency suspension

If at any point the case holder has concerns about the students' progress they request a review discussion with the Head, Mental Health Support.

There may be occasion when an agreement cannot be reached or where issues cannot be resolved by the Support for Study process. In these cases, the following actions may need to be considered:

1. Escalation to Stage 2 – Safe to Study
2. Referral to an alternative University Procedure e.g Student Misconduct or Fitness to Practise.

### 5. Stage 2: Safe to Study

This stage will only be invoked in the following circumstances:

- Following an emergency suspension under section 7 of this policy
- As a recommended outcome of Stage 1 Support for Study
- If is not engaging with the action plan agreed at a Support to Study case meeting
- If in the opinion of the Director, Student Wellbeing or Head, Mental Health Support the case is sufficiently serious to invoke Stage 2 of this process without consideration of stage 1.

#### 5.1 Safe to Study Procedure

Each student under Safe to Study will have a case holder who will be responsible for supporting the student throughout the process. Including initial communications, sharing action plans, formal letters, monitoring progress against actions and initiating meetings and reviews. Administrative support will be provided through the Academic Services Centre

team.

## 5.2 Professionals Meeting

Prior to a Safe to Study panel meeting, a professionals meeting, not attended by the student or their supporters, will be arranged by the case holder with administrative support. The purpose being to understand the facts of the case and ensure the correct people are invited to the formal panel. External professionals such as a medical professional involved in the students care, social workers or 3<sup>rd</sup> sector professionals may be invited to this meeting\*. The case holder should be present at this meeting to share their insights and knowledge relating to the case. No decision making can take place at the Professionals meeting but recommendations which can be made which can be presented to the panel.

\*Due to the timescales involved in this process external professionals may be unable to attend meetings, in such cases they should be asked to provide a statement or other appropriate evidence for consideration.

The Safe to Study Panel should occur within 10 working days of the decision to invoke Stage 2 or within 28 working days of an emergency suspension of studies

## 5.3 Safe to Study Panel

The Head of Mental Health Support will convene a Safe to Study panel to consider the case and act as the panel's clerk. The panel members should include

- Director of Student Wellbeing or nominated deputy as the chair
- Two Academic/ faculty representative(s) (e.g., AD Student experience, Senior Tutor, or Personal Supervisor) one of which who has decision making responsibility
- An appropriate representative from Academic Services who has not been involved in supporting the student
- Additional members invited if appropriate to the case (e.g., Disability Inclusion Team representative, Student Life or Learning Support Team representative, Visa Compliance Team representative, Global Engagement representative, Apprentice Team representative, HYMS representative, Open Door team member)

If a member of Academic Services has been supporting the student, they may attend the meeting to provide information and support to the student, but will not participate in the decision-making process.

Whenever possible, the student should be invited and offered the opportunity to be accompanied by a supporter e.g friend or parent. If the student is unable or unwilling to attend, they may send a written statement, but the meeting can proceed without them.

## 5.4 Safe to Study Panel Outcomes

- approval to continue or return to studies with or without conditions
- short-term suspension for assessment or further information gathering
- suspension with conditions,
- requirement to move out of on campus accommodation
- requirement to withdraw,
- any other action deemed appropriate and proportionate by the panel.

The purpose of any outcome should be to reduce risk and ensure the student is safe to participate in all aspects of student life.

The Chair has the final decision-making authority in cases where the Panel cannot reach a unanimous decision. It is the responsibility of the chair to share outcomes with the student and the case holder. The case holder will make the decision on the most appropriate way to share this information with the student in order to minimise additional distress.

There may be occasions where outcomes are shared with a 3<sup>rd</sup> party such as emergency contact or care team, this is to minimise negative impact on the student.

#### 5.5 Review and termination of the Safe to Study Stage 2 Process

In cases where the outcome is to withdraw this concludes the Safe to Study Process, in all other cases a review date will be agreed, the caseholder will update the Director, Student Wellbeing as to progress against the agreed outcomes, and will agree one of the following options:

- In the opinion of the University and medical professionals the risk has reduced sufficiently to allow the student to continue to study safely, end the process and consider ongoing case management.
- The risk has not reduced however progress is being made, agree another review date.
- The risk has not reduced or has increased and there is no evidence that this will change quickly, the panel should reconvene and agree an outcome.

If at any point the case holder has concerns about the students' progress they request a review discussion with the Director, Student Wellbeing.

It is likely that medical evidence is required to support decision making.

### 6. Emergency Suspension

If it is considered that the risk to the student or to others is very high or a student is lacking capacity to make informed decisions in regard to their studies an immediate emergency suspension may be the most appropriate course of action. The Director, Student Wellbeing or Head, Mental Health may make a recommendation to the Executive Director, Academic Services, PVC Education, PVC Research to suspend the student immediately.

A student under emergency suspension is prohibited from entering university premises and participating in university activities, except under exceptional circumstances specified in the suspension terms.

- 6.1 The terms of the suspension will be communicated to the student in writing, and where possible, verbally, by an appropriate member of Academic Services. It is recognised that in some instances, alternative or delayed communication may be required due to the nature of the student's condition. In such cases decisions may be communicated via a proxy – usually an emergency or trusted contact or external care giver.
- 6.2 A case holder will be allocated from an appropriate team who will ensure ongoing case-coordination and management including where appropriate liaison with faculty, external services and family
- 6.3 The Director, Student Wellbeing or Head, Student Wellbeing will ask the Registry Operations manager to update the students record as "suspended" to prevent further tuition and accommodation fees from accruing.

The decision to suspend may be reviewed at the student's request, usually no earlier than four weeks after receiving the suspension notification. The review will only proceed if the student provides appropriate medical evidence indicating their fitness to return to studies and meet the program requirements. If the necessary evidence is available, a Fitness to

Study Panel will be convened under stage 2 to review the suspension, consider the student's readiness to return, and assess any required support. Return to study may be conditional.

## **7. Right of Appeal**

The student only has the grounds to appeal on the grounds of procedural irregularity or information not known at the time. The grounds of appeal should be addressed in an email to The chair of the panel. The appeal must be received within 15 working days from the date of the suspension or withdrawal decision.

The chair of the panel will arrange an independent review panel to consider the appeal. The outcome of this panel will be communicated to the student by letter or email within 90 days of the date of receipt of the original appeal.

The student is encouraged to seek assistance from the [HUSU Advice Centre](#) when preparing the appeal letter.



## Version Control

Version	Author	Date approved	Relevant sections
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